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## A SKETCH OF EGYPTIAN HISTORY FROM THE FALL OF THE NATIVE KINGS TO THE PERSIAN CON- QUEST.

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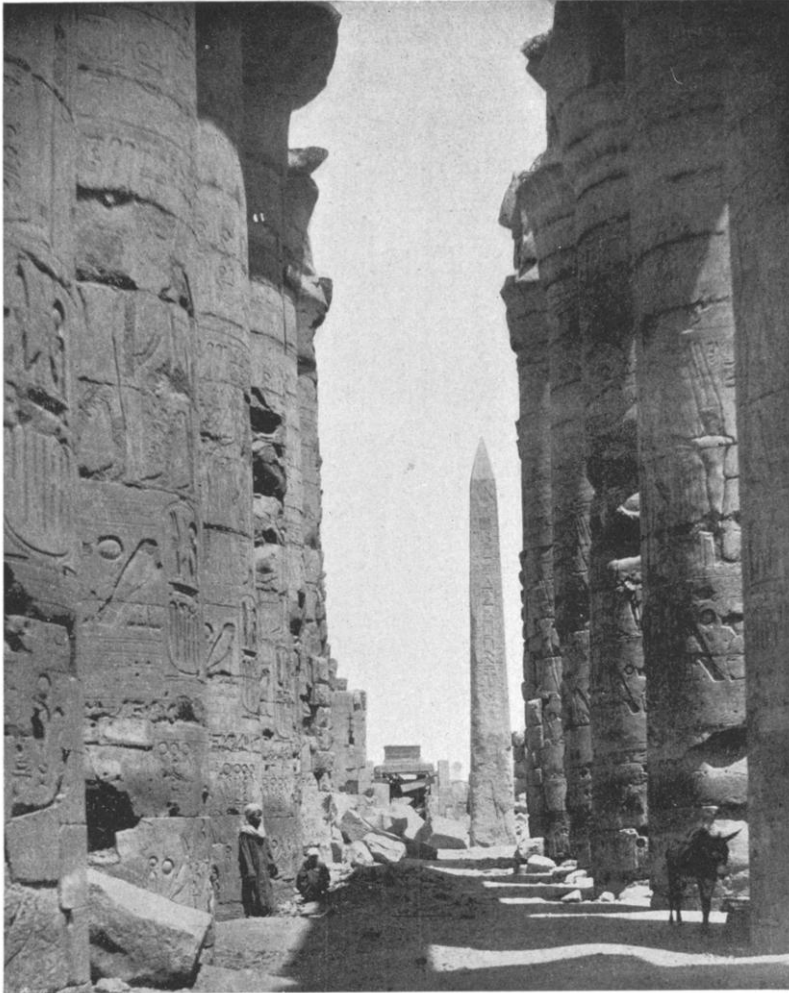
By JAMES HENRY BREASTED,  
The University of Chicago.

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AT the conclusion of our sketch of Egypt's career in the BIBLICAL WORLD of last June we left the nation in the hands of the foreign mercenaries who, already in the XXth dynasty, formed so large a part of her army.<sup>1</sup> Twice in their career, under Amenemhêt I, the founder of the middle, and Ahmose, the founder of the new empire, the people of Egypt had risen from periods of disorganization and decay and shown latent resources which lifted them again into centuries of the highest political power, where they left the world a further legacy of unparalleled achievement in architecture, art, and industries. But the sources of their strength were at last exhausted, and it was allotted Egypt to play only a secondary rôle in the political history of the Orient during the entire last millennium before Christ. Thus while, on the one hand, her arts and industries made her the teacher of the whole world; while her products were found in every mart—and may still be picked up in every ruin—from Babylon on the east to the Phœnician cities of the Spanish coast on the west, on the other hand her armies were the plaything of Asiatic and European invaders. Her craftsmen were supreme, while her kings were often slaves.

The accession of the Libyan military adventurer Sheshonk about the middle of the tenth century B. C. was the beginning of a new epoch in Egyptian history. In every large city of the Delta, like Tanis or Sais, there were mercenary commanders like Sheshonk who were naturally inclined to attempt a usurpation similar to his successful *coup* in Bubastis. The result was a

<sup>1</sup> See the BIBLICAL WORLD, June 1896, p. 457.



COLUMNS (height 65 ft., circum. 35 ft.) IN THE GREAT HYPOSTYLE HALL OF  
THE TEMPLE OF AMON AT KARNAK (Thebes).

(After successive destructions by Assyrians, Persians, Ptolemys, Romans, Saracens, Turks and  
tourists.) See p. 423.

*From a Photograph by Bonfils.*

rapid decline in the power of Sheshonk's Bubastite successors, the Osorkons, Sheshonks, and Takelots (the XXII<sup>d</sup> dynasty), while in the Delta and up the valley there was, within a hundred years of Sheshonk's death, a similar kinglet in almost every important city. We see thus gradually developing exactly the same conditions which preceded the consolidation of the middle and the new empire, and which in Assyro-Babylonian history likewise preceded every such consolidation. Of these Bubastite kings after Sheshonk we know almost nothing, so few monuments have they left us, and so complete is the destruction of the Delta cities. From the tablets recording the death of successive Apis bulls in Memphis we learn that their authority was recognized at this city, and even also as far up the river as Thebes in the twenty-ninth year of the third Sheshonk. They were probably still influential in Palestine, and they had more urgent reason than the conquerors of the early new empire for showing themselves powerful in Syrian politics, viz., the rising power of Assyria. Already near the end of the twelfth century one of the early Tanite (XXI<sup>st</sup> dynasty) successors of the Ramessides had sent gifts to honor Tiglathpileser I on his victorious western campaign. One of these same Tanites later on was glad to gain Solomon as a vassal by subduing for him the still unconquered Canaanite city of Gezer<sup>1</sup> and giving him a daughter in marriage. A generation later the Libyan Sheshonk had seized the first opportunity of gaining control of Palestine and showing that the petty Syrian states were still no match for Egypt.<sup>2</sup> One of his successors, feeling the necessity of action in view of Shalmaneser II's alarming westward progress, contributed 1000 men to the great western coalition which was defeated by Shalmaneser at Qarqar on the Orontes in 853 B. C.

While the weakening princes of the Delta were thus doing all in their power to block the westward advance of Assyria, a new complication arose within the Nile valley itself. Probably as early as the XXI<sup>st</sup> dynasty there grew up an independent Cushite kingdom on the upper river with its capital at Napata,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings 9: 15-16.

<sup>2</sup> *The BIBLICAL WORLD*, June 1896, p. 457.

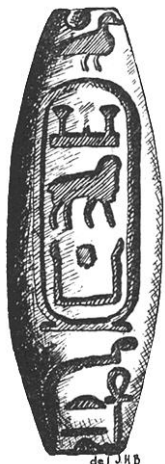
just below the fourth cataract.<sup>1</sup> From the rise of the new empire almost the entire cataract region had become a province of Egypt, and by continual and intimate commercial and political intercourse was thoroughly engrafted with the Egyptian civilization. Every town had built a fine Egyptian temple in which Amon was supreme, and everywhere the arts and industries were those of Egypt. The new Ethiopian kingdom therefore was a complete reproduction of the Theban state, save that it was more a theocracy than the priesthood of Thebes had been able to bring about, and thus the word of the priests was law. The Ethiopians early pushed northward and gained control of Thebes, whose priesthood had perhaps founded the new Ethiopian state, and by 775 B. C., under their king Piankhi, they were ready to advance for the conquest of the lower river and the north. For over a hundred years after this invasion of Piankhi the history of Egypt is made up on the one hand of the attempts of the local kinglets at overthrowing each other, and on the other of the invasions of the Ethiopian kings who found it only too easy to subdue and plunder a nation so disorganized. This situation was further complicated by continual attempts against the advance of the Assyrians.

As Piankhi advanced northward in his twenty-first year he was greeted with joy by the populace, who regarded him as more legitimate than the Libyan mercenary commanders who had usurped the throne. The cities for the most part attempted no resistance, but freely opened their gates to him; he received their tribute and sacrificed in their temples. The weakling descendants of Sheshonk in Bubastis were unable to offer any resistance; already for more than a generation a rival family, whom Manetho calls the XXIIId dynasty, had been ruling in Tanis in the eastern Delta. These local princes all hastened to acknowledge the sovereignty of Piankhi. But at Sais, in the western Delta, the local dynast, Tefnakht (once called king), whose increasing power had really been the occasion of Piankhi's invasion, was with difficulty pacified. Having thus gained at least a nominal sovereignty over all Egypt without

<sup>1</sup> The middle-empire frontier had been just above the second cataract.

dethroning the mercenary kings, Piankhi retired to Napata, his capital.

Such a conquest left behind it unnumbered seeds of discord and revolt. The plotting and fighting of the local dynasts and petty kings were of course immediately resumed; Bokenranef (Greek Bokchoris), the son of Tefnakht, continued his father's career in Sais and eventually succeeded in overthrowing the Bubastite descendants of Sheshonk. Thus the XXII<sup>d</sup> dynasty was brought to a close about 735 B. C. (according to Manetho), having for many years ruled only a restricted domain in the Delta. Manetho represents Bokchoris, the sole king of the XXIV<sup>th</sup> dynasty, as immediately following upon the XXIII<sup>d</sup> (Tanite) dynasty. He therefore succeeded to the domain of this family also, if indeed their fall was not directly due to him. Thus in the same way as his father Tefnakht had done, Bokchoris was gradually consolidating a powerful kingdom, when he also was suddenly checked in the same manner, and for the same reason. Too powerful a ruler in the Delta might threaten the Ethiopian kingdom. The Ethiopians therefore again intervened. Shabaka, perhaps a grandson, in any case not an immediate successor of Piankhi, marched northward as Piankhi had done, was completely victorious, captured Bokchoris, and, according to Manetho, burned him alive.<sup>1</sup> This time the subjection of Egypt was complete and the Ethiopian sovereignty firmly established. Shabaka's mother was a Bubastite princess, and he could therefore make a legitimate claim upon the throne. Hence Manetho begins a XXV<sup>th</sup> or Ethiopian dynasty with him. Thus Egypt passes from the hands of one former servant, the Libyan mercenary, to those of another, the "vile Cush," as he is called even by a Theban inscription of



One of two green faience beads in the Chicago Art Institute, bearing the name and titles: "Son of Re, Shabaka, who liveth forever." This king was the founder of the XXV<sup>th</sup> (Ethiopian) dynasty and is doubtless the same who is called So (mispointing for Sewa or Sawa in 2 Kings 17: 4, Assyrian Sabi) who plotted with Hoshea of Israel against Assyria; ruled c. 728 to 716 B. C. Art Inst. Cat. No. 1325.

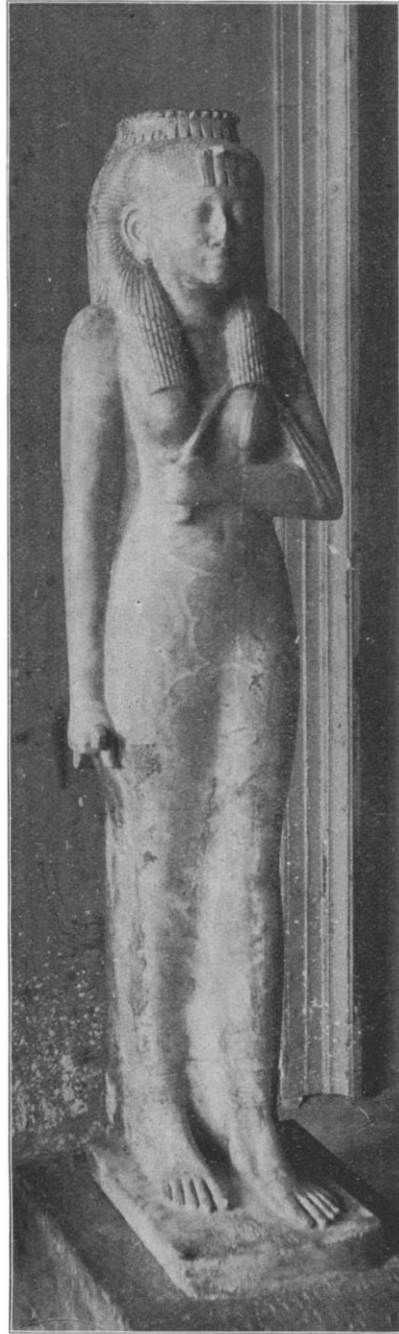
<sup>1</sup> Βοχχῶριν . . . . ἔκαυσε ζῶντα.

## EGYPTIAN HISTORY

Shabaka (biblical So, 2 Kings 17:4). He built and renovated extensively in Thebes, and appointed his sister Amenardis' high priestess of Amon there.

Meantime the power and aggressiveness of Assyria were steadily on the increase. Egypt under her mercenary kings could only look helplessly on while Tiglathpileser III overthrew the Syrian powers, Arpad, Hamath, Damascus, Israel, Philistia, Judah, Edom, Moab and Ammon. Nothing now stood between the empire of the Euphrates and that of the Nile. The accession of Shabaka in 728 and the reunion of Egypt made it possible to take advantage of the death of Tiglathpileser in 727 to form a coalition against his successor Shalmaneser IV, so that Hoshea of Israel entered into negotiations with Shabaka, the So of 2 Kings 17:4, and refused the yearly tribute. On the advance of Shalmaneser to put down the rebellion Shabaka failed to appear, and at the accession of Sargon Samaria falls (722)

\* The mother of Shepenupet, whom Psamtik I married. The alabaster statue reproduced here is in the Gizeh Museum, and the illustration taken from a photograph by Brugsch.

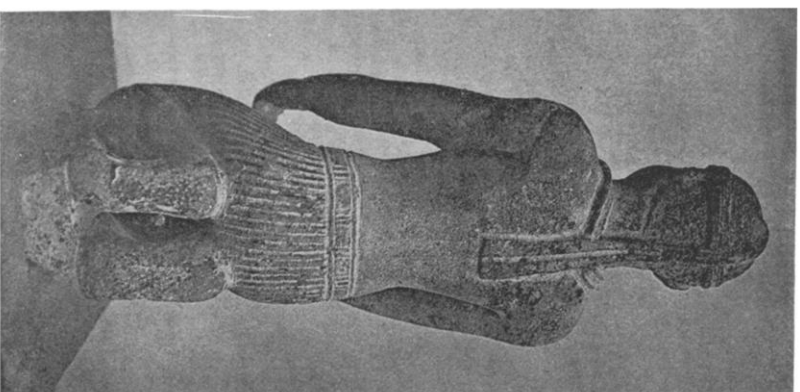
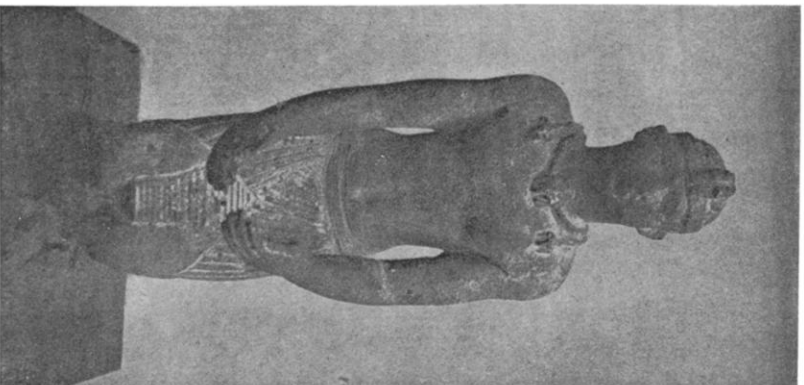
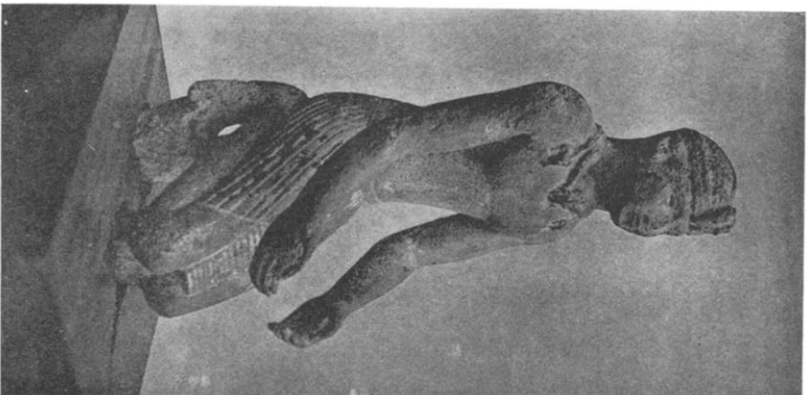


ALABASTER STATUE OF AMENARDIS.

before Egypt has lifted a hand. At length, in 720, after uniting with Hanno of Gaza Shabaka appears on the Egyptian frontier but is totally defeated by Sargon at Raphia. Had not Sargon been immediately called away to defend his northern frontiers Egypt would have immediately been invaded, thus quickly fulfilling the words of Isaiah: "And I will give over the Egyptians into the hands of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord" (19:4). The remains of a seal impression bearing the name of Shabaka, found at Kuyunjik, would indicate a document of state containing perhaps a treaty with Sargon. At any rate in 715 "Pharaoh, king of Egypt," sends a present or tribute to Sargon, and later (711) delivers up to him a fugitive rebel of Ashdod. These facts show the anxiety of the Ethiopian dynasty to propitiate Assyria. Not long before this Shabaka had died, and was succeeded by his son Shabataka, under whom the strife between the mercenary kinglets again broke out. In 701 the Assyrians speak of the "kings of Egypt," and again the land is overwhelmed with its own confusion and uproar as so vividly described by Isaiah: "And I will stir up the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother and every one against his neighbor; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom" (19:2). These are clearly the words of an eyewitness who plainly grasped the situation. A man of Isaiah's statesmanship could easily perceive that no effective assistance against Assyria was to be hoped for from a nation in this condition, and Israel was soon to be sorely in need of such assistance.

Sennacherib, who succeeded to the throne of Assyria on the death of Sargon in 705, was confronted by the same revolts which awaited every newly crowned prince. While he was subduing the rebellious Merodachbaladan in Babylon, the entire West arose and made common cause against him. Egypt had been again subdued by the Ethiopians under Taharka (biblical Tirhakah), about the time of Sennacherib's accession. Anxious to make head against Assyria, Taharka gladly joined the Syrian federation. It was only after the overthrow of this federation that the Egyptian forces appeared at the seat of war. All Syria





RECENTLY DISCOVERED BRONZE STATUE OF TAHARKA (Biblical Tirhakah) ETHIOPIAN KING OF EGYPT (ca. 704 to 663 B. C.).  
(From the *Zeitsch. f. Ägypt. Sprache*, Vol. XXXIII, Plate VI.)

lay at the feet of Sennacherib, and Judah had been utterly decimated. Unmolested by any of the Syrian states, therefore, Sennacherib completely defeated Taharka's forces at Altaku, and Egypt lay defenseless before the Assyrian invader. The catastrophe which now laid low the Assyrians, and in which the devout Hebrew saw the angel of the Lord, alone saved the Nile valley from the plundering hordes of Sennacherib and was as fortunate for Egypt as for Jerusalem. Twice within twenty years had Assyrian troops stood on the threshold of Egypt, and owing to no prowess of her own the land had escaped. A tradition of this second deliverance was preserved among the Egyptians and in very corrupt form was related to Herodotus.<sup>1</sup> But the danger thus escaped was only postponed. For thirty years Taharka husbanded his resources and accomplished considerable building, especially at Thebes. Then deeming himself sufficiently strong, he joined another Syrian coalition against Sennacherib's son, Esarhaddon, but with proverbial slowness was unable to reach Syria in time to combine with the forces there. Esarhaddon invaded the Delta by way of Pelusium (670 B. C.), captured Memphis, pressed up the river to Thebes, while Taharka fled to Ethiopia, perhaps without ever having offered battle (see p. 423). Esarhaddon then divided the country among twenty of the local kinglets, whose personal feuds had so long been the ruin of the nation; they now became his vassal princes. On the rock walls of the Nahr-el-Kelb, near Berût, Esarhaddon engraved a victorious stela alongside that which Ramses II had placed there over 600 years before (see p. 425). Following the accession of Assurbanipal (668), Taharka made a final attempt to recover the dominion of the lower valley, but was defeated, forsook Memphis, and was forced to abandon even Thebes. Even after this the vassal kings of the Delta continued to plot with Taharka against Assurbanipal.

On the death of Taharka (in 663) his stepson, Tanutamon, called Urdamani in the Assyrian annals, advanced on the last Ethiopian invasion of Egypt. He reached no further north than Memphis, where he claims he received the submission of the

<sup>1</sup> Book ii, chap. 141.

local dynasts of the Delta. This invasion immediately brought Assurbanipal into Egypt, whereupon Tanutamón fled to Napata. Assurbanipal advanced up the river a forty days' march to Thebes, which he sacked and destroyed—a ruin from which the great capital of the new-empire monarchs never recovered. (See frontispiece.) Thus it was that Nahum could address Nineveh: "Art thou better than No-amon,<sup>1</sup> that was situate among the rivers, that had the waters round about her; whose rampart was the sea, *and* her wall was of the sea? Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite; Put and Libya (Lubim) were thy helpers. Yet was she carried away, and she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honorable men, and all her great men were bound in chains" (3:8-10). Neither Tanutamón nor his successors ever again ventured into Egypt; the Ethiopian domination in Egypt had thus lasted with some interruptions from about 775 to 663 B. C. Having transferred the capital from Napata to Meroë, far up toward the junction of the two Niles, the Ethiopian kingdom endured down into the first centuries of the Christian era. The strife of the local dynasts and petty kings, which now



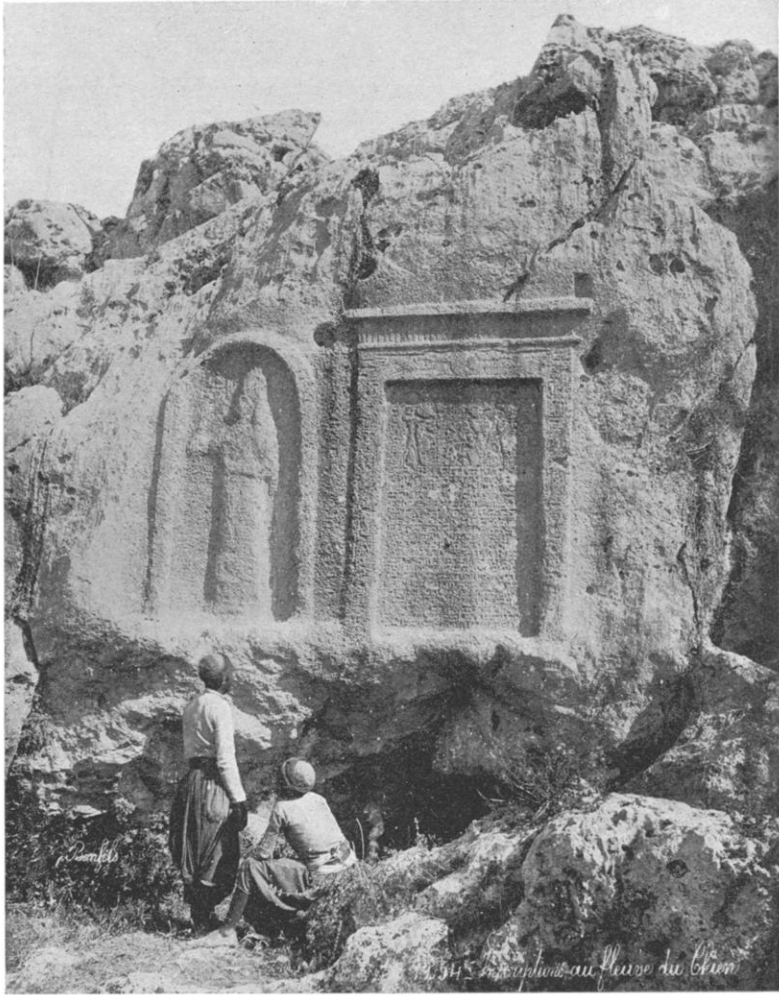
STELA OF SENJIRLI.

(Representing the Submission of Baal king of Tyre and Taharka (Tirhakah, 2 Kings 19: 9 = Is. 37: 9), Ethiopian king of Egypt (c. 704 to 663 B. C.), to Esarhaddon. The negritic features of Taharka, the smallest figure, are very marked. Berlin Museum.) See p. 422.

<sup>1</sup> Egyptian for "city of Amon," *i. e.*, Thebes, whose god was Amon.

broke out anew, might have continued indefinitely, had not a new element been suddenly introduced. Psamtik (Greek Psammetichos) of Sais, following the traditions of his family, was enabled to take the lead by the employment of mercenaries from a new source; these were Greeks and Carians. By this means he rapidly subdued his neighbors, threw off the yoke of Assyria, and by 645 B. C. had gained the whole Delta and the valley. Assyria, beset on all sides, was unable to prevent the consolidation of his power, and from the invasion of the Ninevite king, which such earlier attempts had always called forth, Psamtik was thus delivered. He married Shepenupet, daughter of Shabaka's sister, Amenardis, high priestess at Thebes. This won the priesthood and gave an appearance of legitimacy to his reign. Thus after 200 years of unparalleled confusion and disunion Egypt was finally granted peace and stable government, and Psamtik was even able to invade the Philistine territory, capturing Ashdod after a siege of twenty-nine years. With him, Manetho very properly begins a new dynasty, the XXVIth.

As the employment of Greek mercenaries shows, the country was now open to the Greeks, who were beginning to penetrate into every corner of the central and eastern Mediterranean. In two generations they are offering the Phœnicians an aggressive competition as the most active merchants in Egypt, and before the fall of this dynasty Amasis has given them a city of their own, Naukratis, in the western Delta. Egypt prospers as never before, and in Greek and Phœnician bottoms her products are carried to every mart of the known world. Now began the establishment of her naval power, which made her so formidable under the Ptolemaic empire. This period of the XXVIth dynasty was in every sense a restoration; not of the glory of the new empire, but, in intention at least, a restoration of that old empire which created such enduring witnesses of its power, and seen through the perspective of nearly twenty-five centuries, seemed to them an ideal age. Hence we find in the government of the XXVIth dynasty the archaic titles of the old empire; in religion the sacred texts which had been graven in the passages of the old-empire pyramids; in art the exquisite reliefs of the



STELÆ OF VICTORY ON THE ROCK WALLS OF THE WADY OF THE DOG  
RIVER NEAR BERÛT.

(On the left is that of Esarhaddon (670 B. C.), on the right is that of Ramses II made about 600 years earlier than the former.) See p. 422 of the text.

*From a Photograph by Bonfils.*

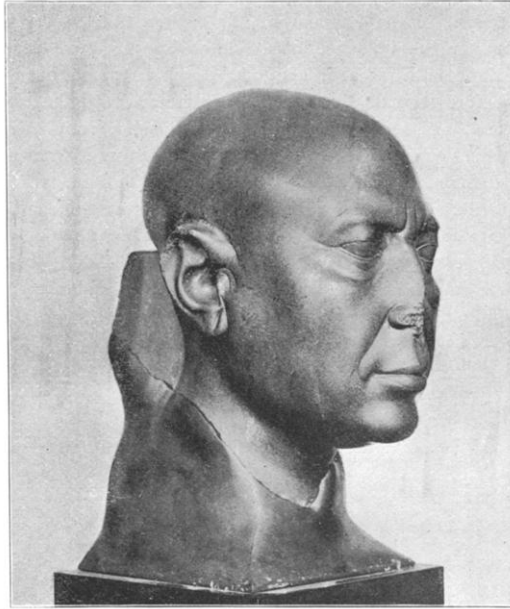
old-empire mastabas, which picture to us so eloquently the archaic life of 3000 years before Christ, and portrait statues which have never been surpassed, even by the Greeks. Of this splendid art, owing to the exposed position of its Delta home, very little has survived; of course the same is true of the architecture. Even the peculiar and archaic writing of the old empire was artificially revived for sacred uses, while for business a very much abbreviated cursive hand now known as demotic came rapidly into use, though its origin reaches back as far as the Ethiopian kings.

At the close of Psamtik's long reign of fifty-four years (663-610) Assyria was near her total collapse. It was very natural therefore that Psamtik's son and successor, Necho, with the united power of Egypt behind him, should regard the way for the reconquest of Syria and Palestine as at last open. Marching through Palestine in 608, he is confronted by the young Josiah on the historic field of Megiddo; before the Greek mercenaries of Necho, the Hebrews were as chaff, and their king was slain in the battle. When, in his northern march, Necho had reached Riblah he appointed Josiah's son Jehoiakim as vassal king. But the unexpected rise of Babylon thwarted the ambitious hopes of Necho, as Jeremiah had plainly foreseen (46:13 ff.). At Carchemish, on the Euphrates, which the Egyptian troops had not seen for over 800 years, the motley array<sup>1</sup> of Necho's army was overthrown by Nabopolassar's son, Nebuchadrezzar (604 B. C.), who thus gained all Syria and Palestine at one blow. Though he dared not march again into Palestine Necho now did what he could to weaken Babylonian influence there, and, in spite of Jeremiah's wise warnings, Jehoiakim, hoping in Egypt, rebelled and brought on another invasion from Babylon in which Jerusalem was besieged and captured (596).

At home the reign of Necho continued prosperously for Egypt. He did much for the commerce of the country, as shown by his projected canal from the Nile to the Red Sea, and the circumnavigation of Africa by Phœnicians in his employ. At the death of Necho in 594 his son, Psamtik II (594-589), accom-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Jer. 46:9.

plished only an unsuccessful invasion of Ethiopia. The latter's son, Wahabre (Greek Apries, Hebrew Hophra, 588-570), made the last attempt of the Pharaohs to regain their former Asiatic conquests. He directed his attack against the Phœnician coast, fighting a successful battle with the Tyrians. This was deemed a favorable opportunity for rebellion by the leaders at Jerusalem. Wahabre, perhaps without a battle, abandoned his attempted conquest, and the result was the capture and final destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586.



RENAISSANCE (XXVIth Dynasty).  
(Portrait in tough green stone; probably the finest portrait which has survived from any ancient art. Berlin Museum.)  
*From a Photograph by Mertens.*



Green glazed steatite scarab of the Chicago Art Institute collection bearing the name: "Wahabre," last of the Psammethichides (XXVIth dynasty), called Hophra in Jer. 44: 30; ruled B. C. 588-570. Art. Inst. Cat. No. 1329.

The unfortunate Wahabre finally lost his throne and his life in a revolution at the hands of the friend of the Greeks, Amasis, who then succeeded to the throne (570). Amasis, after a most brilliant reign, died in 526, and was thus saved from beholding the overthrow of the restoration and the conquest of Egypt by the Persians in 525.

It will be seen that during the entire monarchical career of the Hebrews Egypt was under foreign princes (for even the XXVIth dynasty kings are the Egyptianized descendants of the Libyan mercenaries), and only at the beginning and the end of that career was she possessed of any consider-

able power. It is only with Egypt in this period of her decay that the Hebrews were in any measure acquainted.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Those portions of the Pentateuch, for example, which deal with the earlier Egypt of the new empire, or earlier, betray very clearly that they were produced under the influence of the later Egypt above treated. The name given to Joseph, Zaphenathpaneach, is a good Egyptian name, but it is of a form which *never* occurs before 1100 B. C., and is not common until the XXIIId dynasty. The name attributed to Joseph's father-in-law and master, Potiphar or Potiphera, is of a form which never occurs before 950. Both names were unknown in the time of Joseph; they are commonest in the Saite period (XXVIth dynasty, 663 to 526 B. C.). They show the writer's familiarity with this period and are sufficient in themselves to demonstrate the late date of the Elohist document in which they occur. See STEINDORFF, *Zeitschrift für Aegyptische Sprache*, XXVII, 42 and XXX, 50. SAYCE, in *Higher Criticism and the Monuments*, pp. 212 ff., is clearly unfamiliar with the facts, both historical and philological.